

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13  
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R 261451Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4595  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 0611

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, IS, LE  
SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTION TO ADF MOVE ON NABATIYAH

1. PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY THE GOI LEADERSHIP TO THE MOVE-  
MENT OF ADF FORCES INTO THE NABATIYAH AREA INSOUTH  
LEBANON HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN DESIGNED TO SHOW A MIXTURE  
OF FIRMNESS, ALERTNESS AND RESTRAINT. DEFENSE MINISTER  
PERES HAS THUS FAR BEEN THE ONLY TOP-LEVEL ISRAELI TO ADDRESS  
THE SUBJECT, AND HE WAS VERY CAREFUL IN HIS WORDING. AT  
A NAHAL DEDICATION JANUARY 25, PERES SAID: "WE WILL AD-  
HERE SCRUPULOUSLY TO THE RED LINE, AND NATURALLY ISRAEL  
CANNOT TOLERATE A THREAT APPROACHING ITS BORDERS. BUT  
THE MATTER IS NOT YET CLEAR AND I THINK THAT THE CABINET  
WILL HAVE TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS ONLY WHEN ALL THE FACTS ARE  
SPREAD OUT BEFORE IT."

2. LABOR KNESSET MEMBER MOSHE CARMEL (WHO HOLDS A  
SEAT ON THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE-  
WHICH MET WITH PERES JANUARY 25) STATED HIS VIEW OF  
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THE SITUATION IN YEDIOT AHARONOT JANUARY 26, SAYING  
THAT THIS IS A NEGATIVE CHANGE AND IS A SYRIAN MILITARY  
MOVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT TACTICAL REQUIREMENTS  
AND SYRIA'S FUTURE STRATEGIC INTERESTS. ISRAEL CANNOT  
REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THE PROXIMITY OF SYRIAN ARMY UNITS  
TO ITS BORDERS, WHICH IN TIME COULD ENTAIL THE CON-  
STRUCTION OF MILITARY ENCAMPMENTS AND THE BRINGING IN

OF (HEAVY) WEAPONS. CARMEL SAYS THAT ISRAEL CAN USE POLITICAL METHODS--WITH THE ENERGETIC ASSISTANCE OF THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION--TO CURB THIS VERY SERIOUS PROCESS ON THE NORTHERN BORDER, AND AT THE SAME TIME ISRAEL MUST MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT THERE IS A DEFINITE "RED LINE" CROSSING THROUGH SOUTHERN LEBANON. UNLESS THE LINE IS METICULOUSLY ADHERED TO, ISRAEL WILL BE COMPELLED TO ACT IN SELF-DEFENSE.

3. CORRESPONDENTS FOR HAARETZ (GOLAN AND MARGALIT) REPORT JANUARY 26 THAT ISRAEL IS SEEKING TO SETTLE THE CRISIS BY QUIET DIPLOMATIC MEANS. ISRAEL REPORTEDLY HAS RETIERATED TO SYRIA, THROUGH THE U.S., THE STAND IT ADOPTED TWO MONTHS AGO THAT THE PRESENCE OF A FOREIGN FORCE OF ANY DESCRIPTION AT EITHER TYRE OR NABATIYAH COULD NOT BE TOLERATED. JERUSALEM AND WASHINGTON ARE IN PERFECT AGREEMENT THAT THE SYRIAN MOVE IS VERY SERIOUS AND A TEST BOTH OF ISRAELI REACTION AND THE MUSCLE OF THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION. YEDIOT REPORTERS FOLLOW SIMILAR LINES, CITING RELIABLE SOURCES IN ISRAEL THIS MORNING (JANUARY 26) "THAT THE SITUATION IS FLUID, BUT NO FAR-REACHING DEVELOPMENTS, MILITARY OR POLITICAL, NEED BE ANTICIPATED FOR THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS." MAARIV (DISSENCHIK) REPORTS JANUARY 26 THAT THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD THE U.S. THAT THE ENTRY INTO NABATIYAH WAS DIRECTED CHIEFLY AGAINST THE TERRORISTS. HE WRITES THAT THE AMERICANS ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THIS EXPLANATION FROM THE SYRIANS, WHO CLAIM THAT ISRAELI OPPOSITION TO EARLIER SUCH ADF MOVES HAS UNCLASSIFIED

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TURNED SOUTH LEBANON INTO A REFUGE AREA FOR TERRORISTS.

4. EHUD YAARI (ARAB AFFAIRS REPORTER FOR ISRAEL T.V. AND DAVAR) REPORTS IN DAVAR JANUARY 26 THAT A SYRIAN BATTALION IS "NOW STATIONED BY THE LITANI, ON THE VERY FRINGE OF THE AREA WHERE THE MECANIZED PATROLS OF THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA FROM THE VILLAGES BELONGING TO THE GOOD FENCE ARE FUNCTIONING...ISRAEL HAS REPEATEDLY INDICATED THAT SHE WOULD NOT OBJECT TO THE SYRIANS ENTERING NABATIYAH, THOUGHT IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ISRAEL IS HAPPY NOW THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN THE HINT." (COMMENT: THIS REPORT APPEARS TO BE INACCURATE AND MISLEADING.)

5. IN EDITORIAL COMMENT, DAVAR SAYS THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE NOW REACHED A POINT BEYOND WHICH ISRAEL CANNOT TOLERATE ANY FURTHER PROGRESS. ONCE THE FORCE AT NABATIYAH IS REINFORCED OR EQUIPPED WITH HEAVY ARMS, ISRAEL WILL CONSIDER IT TO BE OF MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE. HAARETZ WRITES THAT THE SYRIAN MOVE CANNOT BE IGNORED

AND THE ISRAEL GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO MAKE UP ITS MIND HOW TO REACT TO THE CHANGE AT NABATIYAH. HATZOFI SAYS THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE VIOLATED THE RED LINE AND THERE HAS BEEN NO ADEQUATE REACTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL. YEDYOT SAYS THAT ISRAEL HAS NOW SWALLOWED ALL OF SYRIA'S EXCUSES. THE SYRIAN PRETEXT (OF PROTECTING ISRAEL FROM TERRORISTS) FOR DISPATCHING HER LEGIONS TO NABATIYAH AND TYRE WAS MADE ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT REACT TO SUCH TRIVIALITIES, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS ON IN ISRAEL.

6. RADIO ISRAEL'S EARLY AFTERNOON BROADCAST IN ENGLISH JANUARY 26 CARRIED AN ITEM TO THE EFFECT THAT "SOURCES IN JERUSALEM" DO NOT BELIEVE THE SITUATION IN LEBANON IS OF SUCH A NATURE AS TO REQUIRE ANY ISRAELI MILITARY REACTION.

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## Message Attributes

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**Type:** TE  
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